

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am Zachary Hayden from Westbrook, CT. I am a high school teacher and father of two school aged children.

I am testifying in favor of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders.

As a parent and teacher I feel strongly about speaking out on this topic. I feel responsible for the children in my home and the children in my school. As a citizen of Connecticut, I feel responsible for supporting my community and advocating for policies that serve the common good.

I know some will try and claim that HB-6355 undermines due process. This is a false claim. Due process is a part of existing and proposed legislation on this matter.

Others might claim that the proposed legislation impinges the rights of the individual. It is more honest and accurate to say that HB-6355 allows a pathway for trained professionals to assess the safety of individuals, helping them remain a part of our communities and not a threat to them. We want our fellow Connecticut residents to be supported and connected, not isolated with destructive intent and the means to act on that destruction, whether it be outward or inward.

I ask that you work in the best interest of our statewide community to favorably report HB-6355 out of committee. This is research-backed and ethically sound legislation that will increase the effectiveness of our Extreme Risk Protection law in preventing firearm suicides and homicides. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Zachary Hayden
Westbrook, CT